

The
Melville Society
N E W S L E T T E R

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"Still publishing at its old stand." The *Newsletter* continues to issue from the Rocky Mountain west instead of Atlantic shores, and its editor (for the fourteenth year) is Tyrus Hillway, acting secretary of the Society. For the time being our newly elected secretary, Howard C. Horsford, is prevented by the prospect of his European tour from assuming the duties of his office. He and the acting secretary have been conducting the principal items of business through correspondence until such time as the executive committee may be able to make more suitable arrangements.

Some of our members have sent their annual dues to Mr. Horsford and some to Mr. Hillway. Until further notice, dues will be received by the acting secretary at Colorado State College in Greeley, Colorado. The amount, incidentally, remains the same as in previous years. Active membership is two dollars; associate membership (subscription only), one dollar. Those mailing checks should make them payable to The Melville Society.

Many of our members have written to inquire about plans for the annual Melville bibliography, which made such a promising start in 1951. The committee in charge, under the capable chairmanship of Stuart C. Sherman, completed work on the bibliographies from 1952 through 1956 last summer, and a good deal of time has been spent on developing an appropriate method of publication. One or two scholarly periodicals have expressed interest in publishing such a bibliography annually. The committee has been delaying publication in any other form in the belief that printing the bibliography in a standard periodical would best serve the needs of scholars. At latest reports, however, no final arrangements had been completed. The bibliography remains anticipation rather than realization. There seems good rea-

son to expect that it will appear in some form during the weeks immediately ahead.

EXPLICATION: "ZADOCKPRATTSVILLE"

It seems agreed among a substantial number of Melville scholars that *Pierre* may be regarded as a document of retaliation which exhibits the author's most caustic devices of satire and sarcasm. Among these devices we may number the bits of correspondence that passed between Pierre and members of certain literary societies who invited the blossoming young author to lecture before their assembled groups.

Some of these invitations, it will be recalled, were addressed to Pierre from a place called "Zadockprattsville." Unless one knows something about the etymology of this formidable designation, he is quite likely to miss the full impact of Melville's malice.

Zadock Pratt was a familiar folk character of the Catskill mountain region of New York State. Writing in the *New York Folklore Quarterly* for Autumn 1957 (pp. 221 - 223), Moritz A. Jagendorf relates one of the many folk tales that have grown up around this legendary mountaineer, noted not only for his exploits but even more for his willingness to appreciate his own superior talents. "I'm the most marvelous man our land has ever produced, folks say—and I must live accordingly," declares Pratt in his characteristically humble fashion.

When one remembers that Zadockprattsville is the headquarters for Braggadocio Incorporated, he gets a slightly clearer picture of Melville's true valuation of the literary people of his day.

—C. Merton Babcock

MELVILLE IN JAPAN

A considerable amount of discussion and research on Melville appears to be taking place in modern Japan. While some of this work is being done by scholars who completed their graduate study in the United States, a portion

of it has been developed through the encouragement of Japanese professors in their native universities. An American Literature Society of Japan also seems to be fairly active.

Several translations of Melville's works have been issued in Japanese since the war. *Moby-Dick* was translated by Nishijari Tanaka and published by the Shincho Sha Publishing Company in two volumes in 1952. Akira Tomita's translation of *The White Whale* was issued by Kadokawa Shoten in 1956. Tomoji Abe, a novelist, is also reported to have done a translation of the same book. Fukuo Hashimoto translated *Typee*, issued by Hayakawa Shobo in 1953. Keiichi Harada has recently translated *Billy Budd*, which is scheduled for early publication. A translation of "Bartleby" will be included in the same volume.

Harada reports that *Moby-Dick* is considered rather metaphysical and therefore boring for the average Japanese reader. Melville for this reason is much less popular than Dostoevsky, Camus, Gide, or Kafka.

Some recent articles on Melville in Japanese periodicals:

Keiichi Harada, "Melville and Puritanism," *Studies in English Literature* (Tokyo), XXXII, 1-20 (October, 1956).

Keiichi Harada, "The Theme of Incest in *The Sound and the Fury* and in *Pierre*," *American Literary Review* (Tokyo), XIV, 1-7 (May, 1956).

Koh Kasegawa, "*Moby-Dick*: A Tragedy of Madness," *Thought Currents in English Literature* (Tokyo), XXX, 53-88 (Autumn, 1957).

Saburo Yamaya, "The Inner Struggle in Melville's *Pierre*," *Journal of Humanities* (Hosei University), February, 1958, pp. 101-120.

NOTES

Published December 2: Merton M. Sealts, Jr., *Melville as Lecturer* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957). \$4.00. (See enclosed circular.)

Published in November: Milton R. Stern, *The Fine Hammered Steel of Herman Melville* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1957). \$5.75.

Completed doctoral study: Nicholas Canaday, Jr., "Melville and Authority: A Study of Thematic Unity." University of Florida, 1957.

Completed doctoral study: Lavon Rasco, "The Biographies of Herman Melville: A Study in Twentieth-Century Biography," Northwestern University, 1956.

✓ College English for March 1958 prints a brief poem by John Tagliabue entitled "After Reading the Last Pages of *Moby-Dick*."

✓ The *Unesco Courier* for February 1957 reports a total of 105 different translations of Melville's works into various foreign languages. By way of contrast, the translations of Jack London number 347.

Klaus Lanzinger has completed a study of "Primitivism and Naturalism in Herman Melville's Prose Writings" at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) and is now planning its publication.

The American Studies Association of Germany is meeting May 29-31 at Mainz.

New periodical: *Abstracts of English Studies*, published monthly at the University of Colorado in Boulder, lists and summarizes current articles in the leading periodicals dealing with English and American language and literature.

What new Melville studies or other activities of interest to our members are to be found in your part of the world? The acting secretary would be happy to hear from anyone with information suitable for our pages. Every member has an obligation to keep his fellow-members informed of activities in this field. Even the brief note jotted down on a postal card may have intense interest and importance for another scholar working at some spot geographically distant.

Reminder: The next annual meeting of the Society has been tentatively scheduled for Sunday, December 26, in the Hartford Room of the Hotel Statler, New York City. The hour: 9:15 to 10:30 A.M. Please forward any suggestions regarding the program to this year's president, Wilson L. Heflin, U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.

THE *Melville Society* NEWSLETTER
IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY FOR MEMBERS OF THE
Melville Society, a group of literary scholars and others interested
in the life and works of Herman Melville. The Society seeks to
facilitate the exchange of information among its members, to
stimulate the study of Melville's life and works, and to encourage
literary, historical, and bibliographical research. Membership is
two dollars per year and includes all services of the Society. Asso-
ciate membership (non-voting) is one dollar per year and includes
all issues of the Newsletter. Address Tyrus Hillway, acting sec-
retary, at Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado.